SECRET

MHFNO: 98-0430861 SENSIND: PAGE: 1

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SECRET FRP:

STAFF

CONF: IMS/ESG INFO: CE/R/IO, CIC/CEG, CIC/CEGEUR, CIC/CEGLA, CIC/LA, CIC/OG, CIC/OGUCT, CIC/PRC, DC/EUR, DO/IRO, EUR/DCCI, EUR/SG, EUR/SGF, IMDORECORD, LA/FIG, LA/FIGSC, LA/MXG, LA/MXO, LA/MXSTB, LIMITED, MDSX, ODPD, FILE, C/EUR, C/LA, CE/R, CE/R/XO, CIC/EUR (7/P)

98 0430861 ASO PAGE 001
TOT: 041406Z FEB 98 DIRECTOR 674771

S E C R E T
STAFF 041407Z DIRECTOR 674771
TO: IMMEDIATE MOSCOW, PARIS, MEXICO CITY, BUENOS AIRES.

FROM: LIMITED DISSEM IMS/ESG INFO DO/IRO, CHIEF/LA, LA/FIG, LA/FIGSC, CIC/LA, CIC/EUR, EUR/SG, EUR/SGF, CHIEF/EUR, DC/EUR, C/CE/R/XO

SLUGS: WNINTEL

SUBJECT: CONTINUED PROTECTION OF COVER AS METHOD

REF: NONE

TEXT:

1. ACTION REQUIRED: NEED YOUR RESPONSE NLT 9 FEBRUARY, TO MEET THE BOARD-IMPOSED DEADLINE.

* 2. THE<JFK ASSASSINATION>RECORDS REVIEW BOARD (ARRB) IS A PRESIDENTIALLY-APPOINTED BOARD WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR RELEASING *ALL RECORDS RELATING TO THE<ASSASSINATION>OF<PRESIDENT KENNEDY> WITH A VERY FEW LIMITED EXCEPTIONS. THE MOST RELEVANT EXCEPTION FOR THE AGENCY IS WHERE THERE IS "...CLEAR AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT THE THREAT TO THE CONDUCT OF US INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES AND FOREIGN RELATIONS OUTWEIGHS THE PUBLIC INTEREST AND THAT DISCLOSURE WOULD REVEAL AN INTELLIGENCE METHOD CURRENTLY UTILIZED AND NOT OFFICIALLY DISCLOSED."

3. LAST WEEK, THE DDA AND THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ADMINISTRATION WERE CALLED TO TESTIFY ON THE CONTINUED WITHHOLDING OF INFORMATION THAT WOULD OFFICIALLY CONFIRM THAT CIA UTILIZES STATE (INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY CONSULAR) COVER. THIS CASE IS MADE DIFFICULT BY THE FACT THAT STATE COVER IS SO WIDELY DISCUSSED IN THE PUBLIC MEDIA INCLUDING THE MANY BOOKS AUTHORED BY FORMER CIA EMPLOYEES; HOWEVER, THE USG HAS NEVER OFFICIALLY RELEASED THE FACT OF STATE COVER. ALTHOUGH THE ISSUE WAS BRIEFED IN DEPTH, THE BOARD HAS REQUESTED ADDITIONAL CONCRETE DAMAGE VIS-A-VIS THE COUNTRIES SPECIFIED IN THE DOCUMENTS AT ISSUE--MOSCOW, PARIS, MEXICO CITY AND BUENOS AIRES.

4. ACCORDINGLY, WE NEED YOUR SPECIFIC ASSESSMENT OF THE DAMAGE THAT COULD ARISE IF OFFICIAL USG DOCUMENTS WERE RELEASED WHICH CONFIRMS CIA USE OF STATE COVER. THAT DAMAGE COULD TAKE THE FORM OF HARM OR INTERFERE WITH CURRENT DIPLOMATIC INTERESTS. THE

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FOLLOWING QUESTIONS MAY ASSIST IN THE FORMULATION OF YOUR RESPONSE. OF COURSE, INPUT FROM STATE COLLEAGUES WOULD BE WELCOME (AND IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT STATE FEELS VERY STRONGLY ON THIS ISSUE AND HAS ALSO FILED A PERSONAL STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE).

(A). IF THE STATION IS UNDECLARED, WOULD THIS DISCLOSURE LEAD TO CLOSER EMBASSY SCRUTINY OR OTHERWISE INTERFERE WITH OPERATIONS? GIVE EXAMPLES.

(B) OTHERWISE, IS CIA UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE HOST GOVERNMENT TO REDUCE PRESENCE, OR MORE FULLY DECLARE PRESENCE, OR UNDERTAKE NO UNDECLARED ACTIVITIES? DESCRIBE PRESENCE. DESCRIBE THOSE ACTIVITIES TO RESTRICT CIA (E.G. SERVICE TO SERVICE, LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES, OPPOSITION POLITICAL INITIATIVES, AND MEDIA ACTIVITIES.)

(C) DESCRIBE SOME PARTICULAR ACTIVITIES WHICH COULD BE IMPERILED?

(D) ARE THERE NEW INITIATIVES WITH THE HOST GOVERNMENT AND SERVICE WHICH COULD BE IMPERILED (E.G., COUNTER-NARCOTICS WHERE PREVIOUSLY NONE)? DESCRIBE.

(E) IS CIA PRESENCE INHERENTLY SENSITIVE BECAUSE OF HOSTILE POPULATION ELEMENTS OR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES?

(F) IS THERE POSSIBILITY OF HOSTILE USE (E.G., RUSSIAN ON CUBAN) TO DISCREDIT US EMBASSY AS A "NEST OF SPIES OR SIMILAR?

(G) HAVE THERE BEEN PAST IMBROGLIOS OVER CIA PRESENCE OR ACTIVITIES THAT THIS RELEASE COULD RESURRECT?

(H) HAVE OFFICIAL USG RELEASES SUCH AS FOIA EVER APPEARED IN THE LOCAL MEDIA (E.G., JAPAN AND CAMPAIGN FINANCING OR PERU AND FOIA RELEASED CONCERNING VLADIMIRO MONTESINOS TORRES). REFERRED TO BY HOST GOVERNMENT EITHER ON THE RECORD OR OFF THE RECORD.

5. FILE: NONE. INDEX: NONE. CL BY: 2103140, CL REASON: 1.5(C), DECL ON: X1, DRV FROM: LOC 4-82.
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ORIG: IMS/ESG(KNUTSOM,44596); AUTH: C/IMS/ESG (FREDRICK C. WICKHAM); COORD: CE/R, LA/MXO, LA/FIGSC, EUR/SGF,; INFO: DO/IRO; REL: C/IMS/ESG (FREDRICK C. WICKHAM).

END OF MESSAGE SECRET